

Rare Plants of Louisiana



Halophila engelmannii - Gulf halophila Tape-grass Family (Hydrocharitaceae)

Rarity Rank: S1/G3G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

Range:

- FL, LA, MS, TX
- Bahamas; West Indies

Recognition:

- Tiny submersed plant of shallow saline waters, rooted in sea bottom substrate (detached fragments may be seen floating about)
- Leaves opposite, born in two to four pairs at the ends of short erect branches, these branches attached to a horizontal stolon that roots at the nodes
- Leaves are oblong or elliptic, thickened, up to 4 cm long and 8 mm wide, and faintly three-ribbed
- Fruit is a membranous capsule with many seeds

Flowering Time: June to December

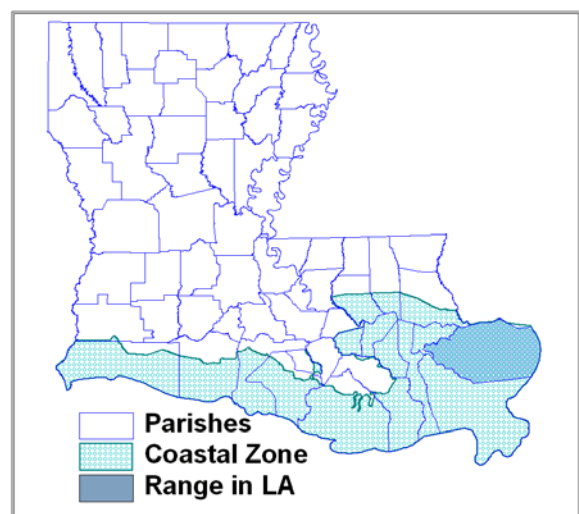
Wetland Indicator Status: OBL – almost always in wetlands

Habitat:

This plant is usually submerged at depths of 2 to 5 feet in marine grass beds. Water salinity may vary, ranging from 20 to over 35 ppt. Occurs in clean waters and most commonly is seen as drifting fragments. In Louisiana, *Halophila engelmannii* occurs in shallow, quiet coastal waters. Often grows with other “sea grasses” such as *Cymodocea filiformis*, *Thalassia testudina* and *Halodule beaudettei*.

Threats:

- Channel dredging and spoil deposition
- Any activities that increase turbidity and sediment load, including excessive boat traffic
- Contamination by chemicals



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Beneficial Management Practices:

- Avoid channel dredging in and around sea grass beds
- Avoid activities in shallow waters that might perturb sediment and increase turbidity

LA River Basins: Pontchartrain

References:

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- Tiner, R. W. 1993. Field guide to coastal wetland plants of the southeastern United States. The University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst. 328 pp.
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